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Title: Need to sanction Rs. 370 crores as Central assistance for drought relief operations in Andhra Pradesh.

DR. M. JAGANNATH (NAGAR KURNOOL): Andhra Pradesh is reeling under severe drought consecutively for the last 7 years. Currently 9 districts in the State are facing acute drought. State Government has undertaken relief measures in 298 mandals that were drought affected and has already spent Rs. 277 crores. Though drought conditions have been prevailing in the State for the last 4 months, it is unfortunate that only recently a Central team visited the state and toured the drought affected places. The team had acknowledged the fact that drought conditions in the State were acute and had assured to recommend liberal financial assistance to the State. The State Government has requested for sanction of Rs 370 crores as assistance for the drought relief operations. However, till date the Central team has not submitted its Report and as a result the financial assistance to the State is yet to be announced.

The most disquieting fact is that despite promise of waiver of loans and announcement of Special package by Prime minister, State Police have arrested farmers in my constituency at the instance of Banks filing cases for recovery of loans. Two farmers were put in jail for having allegedly failed to repay loan. They were released from jail only after a part of the loan amount was repaid. It is requested that Government should direct the banks from refraining to file cases in the courts for recovery of loans from the farmers.

In view of the severe and acute drought conditions prevailing in the State, it is requested that liberal financial assistance should be released to the state expeditiously. It is also requested that guidelines with respected to grant of assistance under Input Subsidy Scheme should be relaxed so that the benefits of the scheme are given to all farmers irrespective of whether they are covered under Crop Insurance or not.